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Chairman: Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*) (A/52/92, 112, 139, A/52/153-S/1997/384, A/52/163, A/52/217-S/1997/507, A/52/284, 318, 432, A/52/447-S/1997/775, A/52/460, A/52/514-S/1997/815)

(c) Population and development (A/52/208 and Add.1)

(d) International migration and development, including the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development (A/52/314)

1. **Ms. Sadik** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) introduced the report of the Secretary-General concerning proposals on the process and modalities for the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/52/208/Add.1), which consolidated the recommendations of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNFPA, the regional commissions and other relevant United Nations bodies on activities to be undertaken in preparation for the quinquennial review and appraisal.

2. She said that she was aware some delegations were disappointed that the report had not presented several options for carrying out the review and appraisal and that many thought a special session should have been included as one of the options. The modest approach decided upon – a two-day high-level plenary meeting during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly – had been prompted by a concern for costs. It might indeed have been better to present a range of review modalities, but the importance of the three-tier process for monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action, or of the role of Member States in determining the process and modalities, was in no way diminished.

3. With reference to the report on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/52/208), she observed that the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Task Force on Basic Social Services for All had worked effectively to promote a unified and coordinated implementation of the decisions of the Conference and of other global conferences. The Task Force had recommended, *inter alia*, convening a technical symposium on international migration, which was to be held in The Hague in the course of 1998.

4. One of the principle conclusions of all three ACC Task Forces was the need to adopt a set of indicators that could be used by the United Nations system and by countries to track progress in implementing conference recommendations and measures taken to reach goals. The Minimum National Social Data Set recently endorsed by the Statistical Commission was a first step in that direction. UNFPA itself would shortly issue indicators for monitoring progress in its major programme areas: reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; population and development strategies; and advocacy. As concerned activities by which countries implemented the Programme of Action, the progress was encouraging. In just three years, the concept of reproductive health had become a reality in all regions. In Kenya, for instance, family planning was now integrated into other reproductive health services, including the control of sexually transmissible diseases and HIV/AIDS. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Department of Family Health had expanded its health programmes and revised its training curricula; India had abolished the system of quotas in family planning and was moving towards the integration of family planning into other reproductive health services. Thailand and Mexico were two further examples of countries where important advances had been made in that area.

5. The Programme of Action had focused on the needs of adolescents. Cuba and Colombia, for example, were promoting information about reproductive health in order to reduce teenage pregnancies. Many of the Gulf countries had also taken initiatives to respond to the needs of young people. In the wake of the Conference, efforts were increasingly being made to eliminate harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; and national commissions on population and development were beginning to be formed in recognition of the link between population stabilization and the achievement of sustainable development.

6. If the goals of the Conference were to be achieved, the funds specified in the Programme of Action had to be raised. Over the previous three years, developing countries had increased the portion of their national budgets allocated to population issues and reproductive health. There had instead been a worrisome downward trend in donor commitments since 1995, and it was unlikely that the $5.7 billion target for the year 2000 would be met, which would have very serious repercussions. It would be impossible, for instance, to meet the global demand for contraceptives. The number of unwanted pregnancies, abortions and births would increase by tens of millions and the child and maternal mortality rates would also rise sharply.

7. In closing, she reiterated the UNFPA commitment to making the five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action a practical, country-focused process, making it possible to identify constraints, draw lessons and recommend effective means of moving forward, while at the same time seeking to mobilize resources. It must be ensured that the Programme of Action would not be reopened for discussion and that the agreements so painstakingly negotiated in Cairo on reproductive rights, reproductive health and the empowerment of women were preserved.

8. **Mr. Chamie** (Director, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/52/314), which he said was based on responses from Governments, which had been asked to express their views on the convening of a United Nations conference on international migration and development. Of the 65 Governments that had responded, 36 had generally favoured the idea, 25 had expressed strong reservations and 4 had considered that other options should be pursued first. As to the funding of such a conference, most Governments had felt that it should be financed by special contributions from donor countries; the donor countries, however, had expressed strong reservations about holding the conference.

9. The report reviewed concrete ways and means to address the issue of international migration and development within and outside the United Nations system. Among the mechanisms within the system, it was worth underscoring the activities of the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All and the Task Force's Working Group on International Migration, which was organizing a technical symposium on the question in 1998. Among the mechanisms outside the United Nations system, the activities of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) deserved particular mention for its growing cooperation with the United Nations system and the important contributions it was making to humanitarian activities as a result of the practical experience it had accumulated.

10. International migration was a complex phenomenon and its interrelationships with development were varied, so that many issues remained unresolved. According to the views expressed by Governments, the topics for discussion at an international conference on the question would be equally diverse. It should be stressed, however, that regional initiatives could be effective in resolving international migration and development problems shared by groups of countries. A case in point was the Puebla process to advance the dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination.

11. **Mr. Kisiri** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the countries in question attached great significance to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which called for decisive actions by all Governments and required enhanced support, especially financial support, from the international community. It was crucial for the developed countries to honour their commitment to help the developing countries continue their population and development activities.

12. According to the Programme of Action, in order to meet the goals of the Conference approximately $17 billion a year would be needed by the year 2000, and that figure was expected to increase to $21.7 billion by 2015. While two thirds of those resources were expected to be raised from developing countries' domestic sources, one third would have to come from external sources. The current external resources scenario, as outlined by the Secretariat, remained unsatisfactory, and he therefore urged the international community to meet the Programme's targets in that connection. That would enable the developing countries to strengthen their population programmes and to address several pressing issues by introducing family planning services, achieving higher literacy rates, tackling HIV/AIDS and lowering infant mortality. The impetus of the Programme of Action should be not only maintained but increased; South-South cooperation had an important role to play in that area.

13. Referring to documents A/52/208 and A/52/208/Add.1, he said that the question of convening a special session of the General Assembly in 1999 had not been adequately addressed and did not appear in the proposed tentative schedule of events. However, the issue was an important one and should be re-examined by the Committee. In that connection, it would be desirable for a special session of the Assembly to be convened in 1999 to review the results of the Conference.

14. He noted with approval that the report on international migration and development (A/52/314) highlighted the work undertaken in that area, and he reiterated the relevance of General Assembly resolution 50/123. Positive action was essential; Member States and the United Nations system must strengthen international cooperation with a view to tackling the root causes of migration, particularly those related to poverty.

15. Referring to two other issues raised in the report, namely the planned technical symposium in 1998 and meetings of the Committee for Development Planning, he

said that information and reports should be submitted early to the relevant intergovernmental bodies for their consideration.

16. The problem of international migration and development was a complex one which should be addressed through a process involving the United Nations and the relevant actors. While regional or subregional approaches were one possibility, the holding of an international conference on the issue was also worth considering.

17. **Mr. Graff** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the State members of the European Union and Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, expressed satisfaction at the Secretary-General's report (A/52/208 and Add.1). The European Union attached particular importance to the implementation of the Programme of Action, especially with respect to the promotion of reproductive rights and reproductive health rights.

18. It was gratifying to note that according to the report, many countries had reorganized and strengthened their health-care services by associating family planning with other activities relating to reproductive health. It was essential to pursue educational action in the areas in question in order to reduce maternal mortality, minimize teen pregnancy and prevent sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.

19. As international cooperation was indispensable in the field of population and development, it was gratifying to note that the international community, including international financial institutions and the private sector, attached great importance to the objectives of the Conference. Many developing countries had also made substantial efforts. It appeared, however, that the results for 1996-1997 were rather less encouraging, and a greater effort would be necessary if the Conference objectives for that period were to be attained.

20. Within the United Nations system, the United Nations Population Fund and the Commission on Population and Development played a key role in the review and evaluation of the Programme of Action. However, the Commission should continue to improve its working methods so that meaningful dialogue on the issues involved would be feasible.

21. The European Union was favourably disposed to the idea of a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action. Emphasis should be placed on the implementation of the programme at the national level. Such a process would have to be prepared with great care, and statistics would be required on the efforts made by individual countries. Given adequate preparation, the review and appraisal could be carried out in the course of a high-level meeting lasting two days, at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The European Union also felt that it was important to facilitate broad participation by civil society, including non-governmental organizations and parliamentary groups.

22. Referring to the issue of international migration, he said that the European Union was pleased with the activities carried out by the United Nations system and the effort that had been made by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Effective cooperation between the two organizations was essential. Accordingly, the initiative put forward by the Commission on Population and Development and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) concerning the holding, in 1998, of a technical symposium on international migration, with IOM participating, was most welcome. The Government of the Netherlands was prepared to host the symposium.

23. Certainly the problem of international migration was a sizable one, but in view of the fact that migrations were frequently regional or subregional in nature, the issue should be considered in the appropriate forums of the United Nations system.

24. **Ms. Hall** (United States of America) said that the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development was an important priority for her Government. At the Conference, 180 nations had endorsed a global strategy for population stabilization and sustainable development based on human rights, gender equality and an improved quality of life for all. The goals were the universal provision of quality family planning and reproductive health services, the education and empowerment of women, the advancement of maternal and child health and the promotion of sustainable development. The Conference had acknowledged that rapid population growth and consumption patterns both played a major role in environmental degradation. It had also recognized that women and civil society were central to realizing population and sustainable development objectives. Lastly, it had emphasized that significant increases in resources were required to implement the approach advocated in the Programme of Action. Much had already been accomplished by Governments, individually and in partnership, and the five-year review would afford an opportunity of sharing lessons learned, discussing innovative strategies and identifying problems. The review could be structured around five theme areas: reproductive health, gender equality and the empowerment of women, population and development linkages, the role

and participation of non-governmental organizations, and resource mobilization. The outcome of the review should be incorporated in the international forum planned for 1999, which should focus on useful ways of promoting partnerships, lessons learned to date, and new strategies for meeting the objectives that had been set in Cairo.

25. She noted that international migration had many facets that made it difficult to discuss at the global level; it had to be looked at in its particular context. Not all international migration was good for the migrant, the receiving country or the country of origin. A balance must be maintained between protecting migrants and enforcing national laws. There was little that could be accomplished at a global conference on migration; the issue should be given increased attention at the regional level. Bilateral or regional discussions, such as those which had taken place at the regional conference in the Commonwealth of Independent States or in the context of the Puebla process, had proved particularly effective.

26. **Archbishop Martino** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo had been given a broader mandate than previous conferences because of the growing awareness that the problems of population, poverty, patterns of production and consumption and the environment were interdependent. The problems of poverty were too often blamed on population growth. However, the data from the previous 20 years showed a steady decline in global population growth rates, while birth and death rates were also down. In fact, international migration had been the population component most affected over the previous 10 years by global geopolitical events such as the disintegration of some States and internal strife in others.

27. Development strategies must take into account the phenomenon of globalization. The Holy See supported "globalization with equity" and believed that that should include resolving the international debt problems of the poorest countries – which often frustrated the development process – and providing greater employment opportunities while respecting worker protection standards.

28. With reference to the follow-up to the Conference, he recalled the reservations the Holy See had expressed about the Programme of Action. While recognizing the need to improve health-care services for mothers and children, he emphasized that life began at conception and that the unborn child must be protected at every stage of the pregnancy. The Holy See could never condone abortion and was concerned about some interpretations of the Programme of Action that gave a place to abortion within population policies; population policies must respect human dignity and avoid any type of coercion.

29. He welcomed the work of the Commission on Population and Development and of the Population Division and recalled that the second theme of the Cairo Conference had been development, while the major themes of the World Summit for Social Development had been the elimination of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and social integration. Because of the new era of economic and social globalization, those goals must be sought in a spirit of international cooperation and solidarity that put human beings at the centre of development.

30. **Mr. Ahmed** (Bangladesh) said that Governments bore the primary responsibility for formulating the population policies they wanted to adopt, and the plans for implementing the provisions of the Programme of Action. However, the efforts of the developing countries must be supported by the international community; new and supplementary resources must be provided, particularly for the least developed countries. The role of the United Nations Population Fund in mobilizing resources should be further strengthened.

31. In connection with the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, Bangladesh supported convening a special session of the General Assembly in 1999, as recommended in Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/42 of 22 July 1997. His delegation had noted the regional-level consultations scheduled for 1998 and the international forum planned for 1999. Bangladesh, an active participant in the three world conferences on population, would consider it an honour to host the international forum and hoped that its offer would be accepted.

32. On the issue of international migration, he said that his Government had followed the work of the regional meetings held in Puebla and Panama City with interest and it welcomed the contribution of IOM in United Nations activities relating to migration and development. Consultations at various levels would make it possible to reach an agreement on the need to convene an international meeting on migration and development. There was a need to establish a genuine global partnership, backed by strong political will, to translate commitments into concrete actions.

33. **Mr. Pankin** (Russian Federation) regretted that the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action (A/52/208 and Add.1) contained only very general information and did not consider the issue of the financial resources that would need to be provided to support population-related activities; nor did it give a precise idea of how the situation was developing region by region

or by key sector. While it did list the measures taken by the various United Nations bodies, that was no basis on which to make a political analysis at the multilateral level. Also, the document did not contain any assessment of the real effectiveness of the efforts made, even in the areas where the Cairo Conference had set clear goals.

34. Despite some promising population trends, the situation in many countries and regions had worsened in respect of the health of mother and child, the impoverishment of millions of people and the lack of the basic conditions for leading a normal life.

35. The example of Russia illustrated how complex the difficulties to be overcome were. The application of pragmatic measures had sometimes produced results in priority areas. For example, the Russian authorities had succeeded in reducing the annual abortion rate by a quarter thanks to joint efforts with social organizations as part of a special federal programme. The infant mortality rate had been reduced by 15 per cent relative to 1994, and the reduction in life expectancy had been halted. The birth rate overall had stabilized, but the death rate continued to rise.

36. Unemployment, a new phenomenon in Russia resulting from the reforms that had been made, had been contained within certain limits, thus it had not become a destabilizing factor and was not causing social unrest, even though in some regions unemployment rates had reached crisis levels.

37. The authorities were trying to deal with the population problems together with those relating to environmental protection and the improvement of health care, bearing in mind the close linkage between socio-economic and demographic factors.

38. From its own experience, Russia would prefer an integrated approach to assessing the follow-up to the decisions of the Cairo Conference, including on the global scale. When considering population issues, it was important not only to assess the situation but also to determine why certain indices had – or had not – been achieved, and which factors had had a critical impact on the progress made.

39. With regard to financial resources flows, the reported figures were far from encouraging; indeed there had been a net decrease in contributions from the international community. There was no justification for focusing solely on external resources. The domestic resources which should, according to the Cairo Conference, account for two thirds of overall resources, had not been mobilized. In order to achieve real progress on the population issue, domestic resources and energetic action by States themselves would be required.

40. No discussion of international financial assistance would be complete without an analysis of spending priorities and the effective use of resources. Such an analysis would help the General Assembly to elaborate concrete recommendations for a review of actions taken by the international community in implementing the Cairo decisions.

41. Greater use should be made of the experience of other bodies with substantial responsibility for monitoring the follow-up to major United Nations conferences, notably the Commission on Sustainable Development. It would also be necessary to strengthen relations, with external actors who played a key role in population issues.

42. With regard to the 1999 interim review of the implementation of the Cairo decisions, his delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to hold a two-day plenary meeting at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. However, an effective preparatory phase would be needed to ensure the meeting's success.

43. The Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Conference on International Migration and Development (A/52/314) was more akin to a sociological survey by the Gallup Institute than a serious analysis of the positions of parties who could help reach a consensus.

44. Russia was directly affected by problems arising from international migration. Since it had not yet solved those problems, it was open to a multilateral dialogue on the issue, within the framework of the United Nations. A United Nations conference would be very timely. The international community should afford greater attention to the solution of regional problems on the basis of decisions taken by the competent authorities.

45. **Mr. Yu Qingtai** (China) said that all countries had done a great deal to implement the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference and to strengthen international cooperation in that area. As the most populous nation in the world, China had long faced the challenges of population and development. It had emphasized family planning and reproductive health services in rural areas and poverty eradication. The objective behind such measures as the provision of production loans, means of production and production technology was to break the vicious circle of "poverty – population overgrowth – more serious poverty". Results had been encouraging and efforts would continue in that area.

46. International migration had become a multifaceted issue with political, economic, social, legal, ethnic and cultural dimensions. It was important to respect both the

sovereignty of the States concerned and their right to regulate the entry of migrants, as well as the legitimate rights of immigrants, in order to shield them from discrimination, racism or xenophobia. The international community should therefore strengthen cooperation in that field, through an appropriate international forum, and should reach a consensus on certain principles which would enable international migration to contribute to the promotion of economic and social development in the world.

47. **Mr. Azaiez** (Tunisia) said he welcomed the coordination within the United Nations system of activities for the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, which called for coordinated efforts to ensure human-centred development aimed at poverty eradication, with particular emphasis on basic social services for all. Tunisia's National Plan provided for a multifaceted approach, which placed its main emphasis on problems relating to the status of women, particularly in rural areas, and children. The authorities were increasingly focusing on child welfare, both in terms of basic education and in terms of primary health care and nutrition. The advancement of women was perceived as the linchpin of mechanisms set up to ensure the economic and social development of the country. A solidarity fund had been established to reduce marginalization and ensure national cohesion, seeking to strike a balance between regions and between different sections of society. In view of the positive results of that initiative, the country had decided to implement a more ambitious 1995-1999 plan by the year 2000. It had thereby created a dynamic and coherent system for poverty eradication and was willing to share its experiences with interested parties. Tunisia believed there was a need to strengthen South-South cooperation and welcomed the contribution to that effort by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had supported the Development Partners Programme and the establishment of centres of excellence.

48. Tunisia welcomed the adoption of Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/42, which recommended the convening of a special session of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Cairo Conference. It considered, however, that the issue of international migration and development would be better addressed at the regional level, before consideration at the international level. His delegation recommended that the subject should be included in the agenda for the General Assembly's fifty-fourth session and hoped that the Secretary-General would continue his consultations and report to the General Assembly at that session.

49. **Mr. Ali** (Pakistan) said that the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the process and modalities for the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action provided excellent guidelines for preparation of the two-day plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

50. The world population, currently estimated at 5.8 billion people, was projected to rise to about 8 billion by 2025, a 33 per cent increase. Demographic pressure would be felt most keenly in developing countries. There, overcrowding would harm the environment, particularly in rural areas where, in order to survive, communities resorted to unsustainable practices representing a drain on limited resources. The already slow process of development in those countries would be further impeded, requiring three types of countermeasures: slowing of population growth, promotion of North-South partnership, such as that envisioned in Agenda 21 and the final documents of other major United Nations conferences, and the eradication of poverty through the creation of an international economic climate favourable to the opening up of markets, debt reduction and increased financial resources flows from North to South.

51. UNFPA had already performed remarkably well in realizing the goals of the Cairo Conference, but resources fell far short of the requirements of that strengthened and restructured organization. While developing countries had fulfilled the financial commitments they had made at Cairo, donor countries had broadly failed to deliver on their promises. The mobilization of resources should therefore be given the highest priority, particularly in the context of the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action, for otherwise targets could not be met.

52. Pakistan was faced with a high rate of population growth of 2.9 per cent for a current population of 140 million people. A policy aimed at reducing population growth had been given high priority and the relevant budgetary allocation had been doubled, with a view to achieving a growth rate of 1.9 per cent by the year 2002. Pakistan's objective was to reduce demographic pressure in order to free resources for education, health care and enhancement of the quality of life.

53. More generally, population and development were closely intertwined. Developing countries could not develop because of population pressures. At the same time, they could not reduce population growth because they lacked resources. In order to avert catastrophe, that vicious circle had to be broken and countries had to work together to implement the Programme of Action by sharing responsibility for their common future.

54. **Mr. Mabilangan** (Philippines) said that General Assembly resolution 49/128 provided a clear mandate to

review and appraise the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. It was, however, necessary to give legal expression to the decision adopted by the General Assembly that it should undertake a regular review of the implementation of the Programme. In that regard his delegation was ready to endorse a more definitive text than that contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/42. The experience acquired at the nineteenth special session of the Assembly suggested that to ensure success there must be a well-planned preparatory process and the review had to be concerned with the implementation of the Programme, not with a renegotiation of what had been agreed at the Conference.

55. After welcoming the Secretary-General's report (A/52/208 and Add.1), which described the various useful activities of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action, he expressed his delegation's support for the principle of a three-tiered intergovernmental mechanism that would play the primary role in the follow-up to the implementation of the Programme. His delegation encouraged ACC to continue its task of harmonizing the follow-up to United Nations global conferences. His delegation had, however, expected fuller detail in the Secretary-General's report, for example on the modalities for review and appraisal by the General Assembly, in relation to which his delegation had suggested using the Commission on Population and Development as the main preparatory mechanism for the review.

56. With regard to international migration and development, he expressed satisfaction at the activities of the organs and organizations of the United Nations system and other organizations in implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/123. The Secretary-General's report (A/52/314) provided a complete picture of those activities, although the conclusions drawn in paragraph 18 seemed to go beyond what could be warranted.

57. The work of the Committee for Development Planning and the technical symposium on international migration, due to be organized by the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, would help the international community to grapple with the complexities of the issue and to make appropriate decisions, on the basis of data provided by the interregional, regional and subregional processes involved in the implementation of chapter X of the Programme of Action.

58. The international community should seek a comprehensive and lasting resolution of the issue of international migration and development, and in that context the heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting in Cartagena, had decided to promote the convening of a global conference on migration and development.

59. **Mr. Fattah** (Egypt) said that the International Conference on Population and Development had marked a watershed, in that population issues that had hitherto been treated from a geographical viewpoint had been linked for the first time with economic and social development issues.

60. The closest attention should be paid to the question of the necessary financial resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference, since the arrangement had been that two thirds of the required sum would be covered by local resources and the other third by donations.

61. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action (A/52/208/Add.1), it was regrettable that the Secretariat had not fully implemented Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/42, which recommended that the General Assembly, at its fifty-second session, should decide on the process and modalities for reviewing and appraising the implementation of the Programme of Action, including the possibility of convening a special session of the Assembly in 1999. All that the Secretariat had done was to make a recommendation implying that there would be no such special session in 1999. He supported the suggestion of the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania that the General Assembly should adopt a recommendation announcing the convening of a special session in 1999 to review the modalities for implementing the Programme of Action. The session should take place in June 1999 and last one week.

62. His delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/52/314) and restated its view that the issue of international migration, with all its economic and social consequences, should be dealt with at the international level.

63. **Mr. Kebede** (Ethiopia) said that the International Conference had provided the opportunity to reach consensus on the links between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. There was, however, a considerable discrepancy between the commitment undertaken at the Conference to cover one third of the estimated cost of implementing the Programme of Action and the actual funds provided. The international community should fulfil its pledges and give special attention to the needs of the least developed countries and the countries of Africa. In their turn the latter countries should allocate

sufficient funds to implement the Programme of Action and their national population activities.

64. The problem of population was mainly a matter of making informed choices. Information and access to reproductive health services, especially for adolescents, should therefore be improved. Ethiopia's population policy was to reduce the rate of population growth and to bring about qualitative changes; a national plan of action for the period 1994-1999 had subsequently been prepared. The results of the policy to date had been modest but encouraging. The institutional arrangements included, at federal level, a National Population Council, composed of representatives of various public institutions and non-governmental organizations, which was responsible for formulating and implementing population policies and programmes. There were also population councils at the regional and zonal levels, and population committees at district level. Lastly, the National Population Office, established under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation, was responsible for coordinating all population and development programmes in the country. As a result of the effective structure thus established, the third UNFPA country programme covering the period 1993-1997 had registered tremendous success in, for example, the 1994 census, the improvement in the delivery of reproductive health services and the integration of population education into school curricula. UNFPA should therefore increase the resources allocated to the fourth country programme (1998-2001). Partnership between Governments and non-governmental organizations remained vital, particularly in the poorest countries, but it should be guided by the principle of national implementation, tailored to the specific needs of each country. It was from that perspective that Ethiopia encouraged both indigenous and external non-governmental organizations to participate in its national population activities.

65. His delegation endorsed the recommendation by the Economic and Social Council that a special session of the General Assembly should be convened in 1999 to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Conference; the session should be prepared with great care. The Secretary-General should submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session a proposal containing the modalities for the organization of the special session. Lastly, he expressed optimism with regard to the outcome of the Cairo Conference and the determination of Governments to implement it in accordance with their national legislation and taking into account the religious, ethnic, cultural and ethical values of their people.

66. **Mr. Saguier Caballero** (Paraguay), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Rio Group, said that a satisfactory balance must be found between development and environmental protection: management of the environment should be compatible with growth and development targets and care should be taken to ensure that resources were used rationally for the benefit of the current and future generations. In that respect, better economic and social conditions were the main factor in preventing environmental degradation in the developing countries.

67. All developing countries had the right to sustainable socio-economic development. In that connection, and taking into account the outcome of the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, as well as the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/93, he expressed support for the action taken by the United Nations system to improve the socio-economic situation of the least developed countries and set them on the road to sustainable development.

68. Population was one factor in development, and a major planning, coordination and consultation effort was needed to combine demographic forces and the development process in a comprehensive approach, as recommended in the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference. It was essential to define more closely the links between population, development and sustainable growth and the environment, while stressing the importance of social issues and individual rights.

69. That explained the role played by the process of review and appraisal of the Programme of Action, which was to take place at the international, regional and national levels and was due to be the subject of a special session of the General Assembly.

70. Migration was another factor that was intrinsic to the development process. The increasing globalization of the economy had given a boost to migratory phenomena, the causes and modalities of which were complex and could only be grasped by making a comprehensive analysis that included both sending and receiving countries.

71. The Rio Group rejected measures and policies that discriminated against or violated the rights of migrants. The problem of migration could only be solved by dialogue and cooperation based on the principle of shared responsibility of the countries concerned and by taking a long-term view that took into account the benefits and costs of migratory movements. The Group would not oppose the convening of

a conference on international migration and development as it seemed a good idea to begin the debate in the near future.

72. Recalling the provisions of paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 51/178 on the main objective of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, he said that any action to combat poverty implied a coordinated effort by United Nations bodies, multilateral financial institutions and non-governmental organizations; in that area, priority should be given to living up to the agreements contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and Agenda 21 and those made at the World Food Summit.

73. Lastly, the Rio Group welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the effective mobilization and integration of women in development (A/52/345), for women played a fundamental role in economic activity and in the struggle against poverty, and they suffered more from the worsening socio-economic conditions in the developing countries. Women's issues should be taken into account when national policies were being formulated, so as to create a favourable climate for their full and complete participation in the economy, and mitigate the negative impact of trade liberalization policies by putting the emphasis on training and educating women and improving their access to credit.

74. **Mr. Lozano** (Mexico), said that his delegation attached particular importance to the follow-up to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, an assessment of which was included in the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/208). He welcomed the progress made in establishing indicators, and stressed the importance of the work of the Commission on Population and Development, the United Nations Population Fund and the regional commissions.

75. Despite their economic limitations, the developing countries had made strenuous efforts to achieve the objectives of the Programme, and in particular to integrate more fully demographic changes and the development processes, since population programmes were accepted as a fundamental component of any viable strategy for sustainable economic and social development.

76. He was therefore somewhat surprised to find that the report of the Secretary-General made practically no reference to subjects relating to development, with the exception of the fight against poverty. In future, subjects such as urbanization, education, economic growth and population spread should be studied.

77. Although the developing countries had rallied behind the Programme of Action, in many cases the lack of resources and qualified personnel had hindered the achievement of the goals fixed in Cairo. It was therefore essential that the international community should provide technical and financial support for the efforts of the developing countries.

78. As for the review of the implementation of the Programme, it should not be limited to the national level; the problems should be considered at the international and regional levels, and a special session of the General Assembly should be convened to that end.

79. With regard to migration, that extremely complex phenomenon was linked to many demographic, social, ecological, psychological, historical and technological factors. The problem thus needed to be approached with due regard for that diversity, from the point of view of both sending and receiving countries. Moreover, it was essential to respect the human rights, dignity, physical integrity and heritage of migrants, whatever their personal characteristics. Nothing would be solved by choosing repression, which could create friction between countries. On the contrary, dialogue and cooperation should be preferred, based on the principle of shared responsibility, and the possible long-term advantages and disadvantages of migration should be determined. The Governments of Mexico and the United States of America, for example, had recently carried out a joint study on the subject of migration.

80. Lastly, with regard to the possibility of convening an international conference on international migration and development, a further study of that complex subject was needed before a definitive decision was taken; he favoured the idea of organizing a technical colloquium on international migration. Likewise, since the phenomenon of migration varied a good deal from one region to another, it would be useful to hold regional meetings or carry out regional studies, as had been done in the case of the countries of North America and Central America.

81. **Mr. Purcell** (Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the international community now recognized that the question of migration required closer bilateral, regional and international consultation and the adoption of cooperative approaches. Section IV of document A/52/314 provided an excellent overview of IOM activities and described the growing cooperation with the United Nations.

82. There had been two important developments since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/148 on cooperation between the United Nations and IOM: first, the signature of practical agreements with UNDP, UNFPA and

UNHCR, and, second, the strengthening of cooperation on the ground resulting from the signature of those agreements.

83. IOM viewed its cooperation with the United Nations, like its contribution to the implementation of the migration-related aspects of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as deriving from its own constitutional mandate. The Cairo Conference had been a milestone in the field, highlighting both the constructive and the controversial aspects of international migration. IOM was contributing to the Conference follow-up, in close collaboration with United Nations bodies, through its participation in the Working Group on International Migration. Given the need to pursue dialogue and cooperation, IOM was endeavouring to encourage sending, receiving and transit States to come together to develop concerted responses to migration issues.

84. In addition to the opportunities it offered, particularly through seminars, IOM was also committed to assisting States with their own consultative processes. Thus, it was providing support to the countries organizing the regional conferences on international migration in North and Central America, in what had become known as the Puebla process. IOM was also encouraging dialogue at the regional level, as demonstrated by the conference of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1996, which had been organized in cooperation with UNHCR and OSCE. On that occasion, IOM and UNHCR had produced a joint operational strategy which was currently being implemented. Similar consultation mechanisms on migration issues were being considered in other regions.

85. With regard to the question of migration and development, he recalled that, at a conference organized by IOM some years earlier, one of the main recommendations had been that Governments of sending and receiving States alike should develop internal coordination mechanisms to examine the impact of migration on international trade, aid, environment and population policies. There had also been a recommendation that Governments should take into account the migration factor in their deliberations on demographic, development and trade policies. Both recommendations remained equally valid today.

86. It was deeply regrettable that the international community retained the simplistic perception of international migration as a North-South phenomenon, whereas the majority of the world's migrants resided in developing countries. It was a fact, however, that differing levels of development – economic, social and political – accounted for most South-South migration.

87. Sending and receiving countries must accord greater attention to the implementation of an integrated policy framework linking migration to aid, trade, investment and demographic and social plans and objectives. The global nature of current migration phenomena and their multisectoral roots required better coordinated multilateral responses.

88. **Mr. Gerus** (Belarus) said that the idea of convening a conference on international migration and development was both timely and relevant, given the high level of migratory movement observed in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Such a conference would also be useful insofar as migration problems had regional and global, as well as national dimensions. Those problems could be resolved only if all members of the international community coordinated their efforts. Mass migration had a destabilizing influence on the political, social and economic situation in countries and regions. The problem of population migration was closely linked to the protection of the basic rights and freedoms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

89. One of the main tasks of the conference could be to draw up, in cooperation with other interested international organizations, a United Nations strategy for the regulation of migratory flows and the prevention of mass forced population displacement at the global level. Such fundamental issues as the problems of refugees and of illegal migration resulting from economic and environmental factors could be discussed. The basic document to be produced on that occasion could comprise a declaration outlining the main conclusions of the conference and a global plan of action on the regulation of migratory flows and the prevention of new uncontrolled flows. The preparatory phase would require a determined effort on the part of Member States. It might be useful in that regard to organize regional meetings of European, Asian, African and Latin American countries, at which the major problems in the field of migration would be defined and an overall approach to their solution identified. The preparatory process could be completed within one to one and a half years, and the conference, which would be of one week's duration, could be convened in 1999. The main task of the preparatory committee would be to coordinate the efforts of the various regions. The conference secretariat could consist of United Nations staff members and representatives of States. It would also be useful to involve interested intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The United Nations could bear the cost of financing the conference.

90. **Ms. Olszowska** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that

in section III.B of document A/52/208/Add.1 on the role and activities of the United Nations system, the Secretary-General had stated that UNESCO was planning to organize expert meetings on one or more topics that were of high priority for review and appraisal and that were related to its mandate. On that basis, UNESCO would identify priority topics to be considered at those meetings, within its field of competence.

91. One of the activities of UNESCO which was relevant to the review and appraisal process was the forthcoming International Conference on Environment and Society, which would shortly be held in Thessaloniki, in cooperation with the Government of Greece. It would be preceded by a meeting in the same town for the executive heads of United Nations bodies, who would consider ways of enhancing coordination within the United Nations system in the field of education for sustainability. Its main purpose would be to follow up, at international, national and local levels, the recommendations concerning the new vision of the role of education and public awareness which had emerged from the action plans of recent United Nations conferences. Education would be considered in its broadest sense, as a means of bringing about changes in behaviour and lifestyles; issues such as consumption, investment and ethics would be addressed, and emphasis would be placed on successful experiences and innovative practices worldwide in the field of education for sustainability. The conference should also provide an opportunity for UNESCO to gather inputs for the preparation of an expanded work programme on education, public awareness and training, for review by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its next session in 1998.

92. Turning to migration issues, she said that she wished to inform the Committee of a new institutional arrangement within UNESCO which reflected the growth in importance and complexity of those issues. The Director General had recently created a new Population and Migration Unit which would be responsible, *inter alia*, for coordinating the contribution of UNESCO to a technical symposium on international migration to be held in 1998. UNESCO was one of the members of the group which would organize the event. The new institutional arrangement should enable UNESCO to reinforce its position in the mainstream of inter-agency activities in the field of migration and development and to establish cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations such as IOM, OECD, the European Union and the Council of Europe, as well as regional development banks. The Unit would provide technical support to other UNESCO programmes in relation to migration and population issues, and would initiate extrabudgetary projects.

93. The involvement of UNESCO in population and migration issues dated back to the 1950s. In more recent times, UNESCO had carried out important work on the main causes and the consequences of international migration in all major regions, and on the impact of migration on sending and receiving countries.

94. **Ms. Acosta** (Venezuela) said that the Cairo Conference had provided an opportunity to recognize the links among all the aspects of sustainable development, particularly the fight against poverty, economic growth, environmental protection, and population.

95. Population programmes should help to create a more just, safe and tolerant society, promoting gender equality and developing individual liberties, and respecting each person's right to participate through his or her work in the well-being of the community; poverty, by contrast, was a source of inequalities and marginalization and, consequently, of hatred and violence.

96. The numbers of people migrating to urban areas in search of decent living conditions had increased considerably. That process must be curbed by promoting the creation of economic and commercial centres in rural areas and ensuring better remuneration for agricultural labour. Urban living was far from being a cure for poverty; it worsened it, by adding malnutrition and insecurity.

97. Much remained to be done before urban areas could offer good living conditions to all. To begin with, civil society and the private sector must be involved in national policies, which in turn must respect human values and seek to harmonize demographic trends with sustainable development.

98. Her delegation reaffirmed its support for the full implementation of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference.

99. **Mr. Reshetnyak** (Ukraine) said that the documents before the Committee under agenda item 97 showed how different United Nations bodies had incorporated the Cairo recommendations into their activities. However, his delegation would have liked to see more detailed information on how United Nations agencies, funds and programmes cooperated among themselves at the country and regional levels and on their relations with the relevant national authorities. Those aspects had been insufficiently reflected in the report of the Secretary-General.

100. The Commission on Population and Development should continue to play a leading role in reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference, and should put more focus on its work on national experience in the area of population. That would contribute to upgrading its efficiency.

101. As to the implementation of the Programme of Action in countries with economies in transition, his delegation noted with satisfaction the important contribution of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe which, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), had focused its activities in the field of population on follow-up to the Conference in those countries. In that context, he commended the joint efforts of the Economic Commission for Europe and UNFPA, which had recently organized, with support from the Government of Switzerland, a donor conference to assist the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in carrying out their population censuses.

102. The problem of migrants, refugees and displaced persons was of direct concern to Ukraine since illegal immigration had become a threat to the safety of its population, a source of criminality, of drugs and weapons smuggling, and of spreading of dangerous diseases. In recent years, Ukraine had experienced a sharp increase in the number of illegal migrants "in transit" who, on their way to Western Europe, settled in the border regions of Ukraine for indefinite periods.

103. The major reason for migration on the territory of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics remained the unstable political, economic and environmental situations in the countries from which the migrants were forced to escape. A great number of them were seeking asylum in Ukraine.

104. Although facing its own economic problems, Ukraine nevertheless implemented the programme of action in the field of migration elaborated by governmental bodies, in close collaboration with UNHCR, IOM, OSCE and UNDP. He noted the valuable technical and organizational assistance provided by IOM, enabling support to be provided for numerous migrants and refugees entering Ukrainian territory.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.